DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 315 263 RC 017 378

AUTHOR Newcomb, Thomas L.
TITLE The Three Basic Amish Churches and Their Views of Education.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 53p.; Adapted from "Perspectives on Amish and Conservative Mennonite Culture and Education," by Thomas L. Newcomb, 1983.
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Amish; *Child Rearing; Cross Cultural Studies; Cultural Isolation; *Educational Practices; Elementary Education; *Parochial Schools; Religious Cultural Groups; *Religious Education; Rural Schools
IDENTIFIERS Mennonites

ABSTRACT

There are three main groups of Amish: the Old Order Amish, the oldest group which is also the most strict and conservative; the Beachy Amish of Amish-Mennonites, the most liberal; and the New Order Amish, intermediate between the other two in conservatism. These three papers examine the views of education and schooling practices of these three groups. Old and New Order Amish and Beachy Amish operate parochial schools to avoid exposing their children to secular influences in the public schools. Compulsory education is also a problem, the Amish believing that 8 years' education is sufficient. Their freedom to operate their schools as they wish is constitutionally guaranteed as freedom of religion. In all subjects the emphasis is on the practical, on the Amish value system, and on Godly principles. High standards are set for work quality. The Beachy Amish who allow the most modern conveniences, believe in a functional Christian education, often beyond the eighth grade, if under the influence of the church. These papers describe the communities, histories, religious beliefs, school buildings, teachers, and curricula of these groups, and their similarities and differences in these regards. The three papers contain 26 references. (DHP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED315263

THE THREE BASIC AMISH CHURCHES AND THEIR VIEWS OF EDUCATION

Dr. Thomas L. Newcomb

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Thomas L. Newcomb

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ED017378

THE THREE BASIC AMISH CHURCHES AND THEIR VIEWS OF EDUCATION

Dr. Thomas L. Newcomb

Adapted from Perspectives On Amish and Conservative Mennonite Culture and Education by Thomas L. Newcomb, 1983

This collection compiled and reproduced "on demand" in 1989

© 1989
Thomas L. Newcomb, Ph.D., D.Litt.
19130 Nelson-Parkman Rd.
Garrettsville, Ohio 442321

Thomas L. Newcomb is a native resident of Ohio. He holds a B.A. in elementary and special education, a M.Ed. in independent study of cultural foundations of education, and several non-academic doctorial degrees in non-traditional studies. He is a teacher, poet, freelance writer and is an scholar in Amish studies.

PART ONE: The Old Order Amish and Education

PART TWO: The New Order Amish and Education

PART THREE: The Amish-Mennonites or "Beachy Amish" and Education

Part One: The Old Order Amish and Education

The Old Order Amish have been in America for about 200 years. They are a group of Christian separatists that live a life-style very different from the mainstream of modern Western civilization. The Amish church dates back to the Reformation period in Europe in the 1500's. The Amish are an ultra-conservative wing of the Mennonite church that formed from the early Anabaptists. The Anabaptists were non-conformed to their contemporary society and lived by simple Bible doctrines. They withdrew from the state church and advocated separation of the offices of civil authority and church. The Anabaptists were also a nonresistant people, opposed to any violence. Persecution by the government and state church was great. Many Anabaptists were martyred or fled for their lives. In Europe, one of the major Anabaptist groups came to be known later as "Mennonites." The Mennonites emerged in the Netherlands regions and eventually joined with Anabaptists from the Swiss regions. A group of very conservative Anabaptists, however, broke off on their own, partially under the leadership of a young bishop, Jacob Ammann. The Amish of today trace back to Ammann's group.

Persecution eventually drove the Amish and other Anabaptist groups to America, with migrations starting principally in the early to mid-1700's. Since coming to America, many Anabaptist churches, such as the Mennonites and German Baptists, have grown and divided into a vast range of groups and conferences. Some have nearly been assimilated into contemporary Am-

erican society. Not so with the Amish. Although a few Amish groups now exist, they are all considered to be quite conservative, much more so than nearly any Mennonite group (except the Old Order Mennonites, who are nearly the same as the Amish in several ways.) The Old Order Amish and their beliefs on child rearing and education will be the subject of this report. It should be pointed out that the Amish position on these topics is basically shared by the Old Order Mennonites. Other Amish groups, such as the "Beachy Amish," have been grouped with the Conservative Mennonites for discussion in another paper.

The Amish (from hence forward meant to be the Old Order) live a non-conformed life in our modern society. They live in close-knit communities; have very rigid, very traditional dress patterns; use few modern conveniences, such as electricity and telephones in their homes; use horse power instead of autos; and hold their church services in members' homes, using their mother tongues--Germanic languages. Nearly every phase of Amish life is dictated by Bible doctrines and traditional values and practices.[1] Therefore it is sometimes necessary to quote scripture to explain the basis for Amish beliefs and practices.

Children are greatly desired in the Amish family and are welcomed as a gift from God. Parents receive the ultimate primary responsibility of child training. Parents are to teach their children the values of respect and humility, with the final goal of reaching Heaven and eternal life. Children are

believed to be born with a sinful nature, through the fall of man, and therefore, must be loved and trained to accept salvation through God's provisions. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child..." (Proverbs 22:15;) and "...whoso confesseth and forsaketh (his sins) shall have mercy." (Proverbs 28:13.) The Amish, like the Mennonites, believe that such choices can only be made by an adult, and that children must be admonished so they will eventually make the correct choice when they grow up.[2]

Parents are believed to be responsible to God for raising up their children properly, teaching them right and wrong, along with other virtues cherished by the Amish people.[3] Children are trained to be well-mannered, humble, industrious, and most importantly, obedient to parents and to God. "...a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." (Proverbs 29:15.) Training in survival skills, practical knowledge, and traditional practices begins nearly at birth. Children are disciplined firmly, but with love and understanding. Moral value training is interwoven by parents into practical discipline. Respect and obedience are given great importance.

Children are taught the value of hard work early in life. Young children receive regular chores, usually by school age. Sex distinction in roles is also clearly identified by clothing and jobs very early in life.[4] The Amish place a great deal of importance on the parental practices and beliefs of their early

Anabaptist forerunners. These basic beliefs would include:[5]

1. Children are born with a sinful nature, through no fault of their own. This inborn trait does not condemn them, for God in His grace does not impute it to them. Children are in a period of grace, through God's love. However, when they reach the age of accountability they will choose between Godly living and salvation, as opposed to letting sin have a place in their lives. Sinners will be lost.

2. Child training is a serious consideration, and primarily the parents' responsibility.

3. Parents should teach, admonish, and chastise their children from the time they are old enough to understand.

4. The parents have a duty to teach their children right from wrong, using the Bilbe as a guide.

5. Discipline should be loving, firm, and fair.

6. Parents should not spoil their children.

7. Parents need to live an example for their children.

Menno Simons, an early Anabaptist-Mennonite minister and writer, is thought to be a fine and gifted writer by the Amish people. Many Amish families have copies of his writings in their homes. This quote from Simons is printed in an Amish book on child training:[6]

> "Beloved brethren in Christ, if you rightly know God and His Word, and believe that the end of the righteous is everlasting life and the end of the wicked is death, then study to the utmost of your power to lead your children on the way of life and to keep them from the way of death, as much as in you is... Teach them, and instruct them, admonish them, threaten, correct, and chastise them as circumstances require... If you do this, you will live to see much honor and joy in your children..."

Secondary responsibility for child nurturing would be placed upon the church community itself. Children, through the standards of community conformity, are taught their relationship to the society of the Amish as a whole. A major arm of the church in child nurturing is the school. The school is responsible for teaching the child practical knowledge, literacy, skills, and Amish values that will allow him or her to become an active contributor and participant in the church and Amish community.[7] Basically, they are farmers and craftsmen.

Today most Old Order Amish children attend parochial elementary schools operated by the Amish. There are estimated to be approximately 450 Amish schools with a total enrollment over 13,000.[8] In the early 1900's, all Amish children attended the small rural county schools operated by the public officials. School consolidations, removal of prayer and Bible reading, and new progressive teaching materials and techniques caused the Amish to become displeased with public education. Compulsory education laws became an issue, also. The Amish have maintained that eight years of formal schooling is enough for their simple life-style. They do not want their children isolated from the farm and family for so many years in a non-Amish environment. The Amish also feel exposure to outside thought and value systems will lead their youth away from the Amish value system, so vital to their society and its maintenance. The Amish also feel that higher education is not necessary: "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." (1 Corinthians 3:19.)

The Amish position on displeasure with public schools is well expressed by Amish writer and educator, Joseph Stoll:[9]

1. Sending children to secular schools is contrary to the Bible doctrine of non-conformity to the world.

2. Amish children have non-Christian companions and environment in public schools.

3. Public schools promote a secular view of life instead of a sacred one.

4. Public schools tolerate, and sometimes promote, atheism, evolution, and other unGodly beliefs and practices.

5. Teachers in public schools are not of the Amish faith, and many are not even Christians.

6. Public schools are changing fast, often in directions of alarm to the Amish, in the areas of control, teaching of religion, and subject matter.

Amish schools are established and operated by local Amish people. In some rural areas, public schools may have some Amish pupils, but these cases are rare. Amish school organization usually follows this pattern: a local superintendent, several local schools operated by local school boards, Amish teachers chosen by the school boards. The school is considered community property, built on donated or rented (for a nominal fee) land.

Teachers are chosen for their scholastic ability, but have had no formal training beyond their eight year education. Teachers will study hard in preparation for their duties. Local and regional meetings and institutes are held to further the training of the teachers and to discuss common concerns. Most schools

are staffed by two teachers.

Amish schools usually have one or two rooms, one for lower classes and one for upper classes. Most of the time teacher "helpers" will assist the instructing teachers, at least a few days a week. Both men and women can teach in Amish schools, being paid a moderate salary out of tuition paid by parents. Supplies and text materials are bought by the school board, with or without help from the teachers. An Amish-owned and operated publishing company was started in the 1950's for printing and supplying to Amish schools materials such as texts, workbooks, and teacher resource manuals. Now there are several such companies in operation in the United States. A common periodical is The Blackboard Bulletin, printed especially for the cause of Amish schools and teachers. It is printed by Pathway Publishers, an Amish operation.

For many years after their inception, Amish schools came into various unfortunate conflicts with government officials. This was mainly due to the fact that Amish schools and their teachers did not comply with minimum educational standards in several states. Some areas were able to compromise with the Amish, but in other cases, there were arrests, court battles, and general confusion.[10] Issues came to a head in 1972, in the Supreme Court of the United States. In the case of Wisconsin vs. Yoder, the justices ruled that the Amish could exercise their freedom of religion in the operation of their own schools, with-

out state intervention. Since that time, the Amish have had a fairly easy time operating their own private schools.

Practicality might best describe the overall picture of the Amish school. Buildings and grounds are simple, well-kept, and spacious. The building itself is usually of brick, block, or wooden design, much in the style of the little country schools of the past. Large windows utilize the sun's light since there is no electricity in the schoolhouse. A moving divider splits the two upstairs rooms. There is usually a concrete basement with a central heating stove and sometimes a hand-pump for water. No other indoor plumbing is present. Teachers arrange their rooms as they wish, but the setting is usually quite traditional. Desks are often wooden and fixed to the floor in rows. Children walk to school or may be hauled in by a hired van. Sack lunches prevail unless some local mothers bring in hot lunches as a treat. There are generally three recess periods and a lunch period daily. Amish schools meet the minimum length of day and days per year requirements of the state in most areas of the country.

Classes are held in English, to promote a mastery of the language, since the mother tongue of the Amish society is Amish-German dialect (Pennsylvania German.) Quietness, politeness, and obedience are required during school hours. It is the teacher's job to maintain deportment and to discipline offenders. Normally, in most schools, classes such as reading, writing, English, math, spelling, geography, nature, histroy, and art are taught. A few

days a week, pupils are given instruction in the written, religious language of the Amish--"High" German. Teachers supplement instruction with projects, programs, and field trips. In everything taught, and in all the philosophies, there is emphasis on the practical, on the Amish value system, and on Godly principles.[12] High standards are set for work quality, however.

Although studies on the Amish are few, they seem to indicate that Amish children in Amish schools do as well or better scholastically than other rural children.[13] More than this, it seems Amish children are happier and very comfortable in their own schools which promote their own value systems and enclose them in their cultural environment. Amish educators are aware that they need to keep upgrading their schools to meet the needs of their children. It suits Amish elders much better to have their children in school and social environments that do not threaten the Amish religious value system.[14] It is known that the teen years are a time of emotional instability for Amish youth. Although some leave the society, many more elect to stay. This, no doubt, is influenced by the school years of the young people and the environment in which they received their eight years of education.

The Bible passages from Proverbs, this writer believes, very well sums up the Amish view of education and their schools. It is a system that the past 50 years have proven to be effectual, vital, and of service to a conservative, God-fearing people.

"Train up a child in the way he should go:
and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
(Proverbs 22:6.)

For the Amish, time has proven that this system works.

Notes and References

[1]see: Amish Confession of Faith, Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada, 1976.

[2]Ibid., Articles IV, V, and VII.

[3]Hostetler, John A., Amish Society, 3rd Ed.-Rev., pp. 172-173. Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada, 1980.

[4]Ibid., pp. 173-178.

[5]condensed from: Stoll, Joseph, Child Training, section 2, Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada, 1976.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Hostetler, op. cit., p. 173.

[8]Blackboard Bulletin, "Amish School Directory--1980-81," Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada.

[9]condensed from: Stoll, Joseph, Who Shall Educate Our Children?, Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada, 1965.

[10]for examples and background see: Amish Sectarian Education in Ohio, Research Report #44, Ohio Legislative Service

Commission, Columbus, Ohio, 1960.

[11] for a full treatment see: Keim, Albert, Compulsory Education and the Amish, Beacon Press, New York, New York, 1975.

[12] see: Minimum Standards for the Amish Parochial Schools or Private Elementary Schools of the State of Ohio, as a Form of Regulations, as compiled and approved by committee, Apple Creek, Ohio.

[13] Hostetler, John A., and Huntington, Gertrude E., Children in Amish Society: Socialization and Community Education, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York, New York, 1971.

[14] Hostetler, John A., Amish Society, 3rd Ed.-Rev., pp. 255-256. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1980.

Bibliography and Recommended Reading

Amish Confession of Faith, Dortrecht, Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada, 1976.

Hostetler, John A., Amish Society, 3rd Ed.-Rev., John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1980.

Hostetler, John A., and Huntington, Gertrude E., Children in Amish Society: Socialization and Community Education, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York, New York, 1971.

Kauffman, Daniel, Doctrines of the Bible, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1928.

Keim, Albert, Compulsory Education and the Amish, Beacon Press, New York, New York, 1975.

Minimum Standards for the Amish Parochial Schools or Private Elementary Schools of the State of Ohio, as a Form of Regulations, as approved by committee in conference, Apple Creek, Ohio.

Ohio Legislative Service Commission Research Report #44, Amish Sectarian Education in Ohio, Columbus, Ohio, 1960.

Stoll, Joseph, Challenge of the Child, Pathway Publishers,

Aylmer, Ontario, Canada, 1967.

Stoll, Joseph, Child Training, Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada, 1976.

Stoll, Joseph, Who Shall Educate Our Children?, Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada, 1965.

Part Two: The New Order Amish and Education

The "New Order" Amish are a group that has recently emerged among the Amish churches. Basically, there are three main groups of Amish. The Old Order Amish are the oldest group, the main branch that emerged out of the Mennonites in Anabaptist times during the years following the Reformation in Europe. The Old Order is the most strict and conservative Amish group. The most liberal of the Amish groups is the Beachy Amish (formed in 1927,) sometimes called Amish-Mennonites. In the range of conservatism, the New Order would probably be classified between the Old Order and the Beachy Amish.

The New Order Amish represent various departures from the Old Order: keeping the plain garb, but allowing the use of electricity, telephones, meetinghouses for preaching (sometimes,) tractors for farming, and other specified changes in doctrine.[1] New Order Amish lifestyles still distinctively identify them as Amish, but in many ways they differ from the Old Order, in doctrine and practice of their faith.

Differences were the reason for the New Order formation out of the Old Order. Basically, the New Order began when groups of families, and sometimes nearly whole church districts, wished to relax restrictions on the use of telephones, electricity, and tractor-driven farming implements.[2] There were also differences on certain religious beliefs and practices which caused the cleavage; the New Order speaks out against tobacco

use and advocates a more dynamic, cleaner Christian faith and doctrine.[3] The New Order believes in the assurance of salvation and "the new birth," unlike the standard belief that prevails in the Old Order which teaches a "redemptive life" and "hope" of salvation.[4] Another change is that the New Order members believe in a "salvation experience" and this leads to "witnessing," or mission evangelism.

The New Order Amish first emerged in 1966 in the Lancaster County area of Pennsylvania.[5] New Order groups in Ohio first emerged in the Holmes County area in 1968.[6] Although preferring the name, and being labeled "New Order" by scholars, other names have been applied in certain cases, including: "Youth Meeting Amish," "New Amish," and churches using their bishop's name (i.e., Stolzfus Church.)[7]

Since this is a relatively new Amish church, there is a minimum of monographic literature concerning them.[8] There are approximately 40 New Order church districts in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Kentucky, and Indiana.[9] There are some variations in church standards between these New Order groups, but all of them deviate from the Old Order. In some cases, groups which have retained the name New Order have become more like the Beachy Amish or the Conservative Mennonites, as far as the conveniences they allow or their church standards.[10]

Most New Order Amish churches are "horse and buggy

churches," using this mode of transportation, although they use tractors and other mechanized machinery.[11] Many New Order groups have buggíes that are different than the restrictive Old Order. New Order buggies may use rubber tires, sliding doors, and other features not permitted by most Old Order churches.[12] A few New Order churches have adopted the use of the car; but, as in the Old Order, this is often a forerunner of more radical changes.

Generally speaking, Old Order and New Order groups cannot have full church fellowship, although the limits of mutual toleration are generally quite high.[14] The New Order would not shun a baptized member who leaves the church for another plain church, where as the Old Order would. This area of doctrine was a factor in the New Order and the Beachy splits from the Old Order Amish. In some cases, a New Order group that wishes to start a fellowship will migrate away from the Old Order church they are leaving.[15]

Another major area of difference between the Old Order and the New Order would be church charter and religious practices. This would include the shunning beliefs previously discussed, for one point. The New Order accepts the "new birth experience" and knowing one is "saved by the grace of Christ." They advocate a more puritanical, evangelical religious practice--forbidding drinking, smoking, and advocating very responsible courtship practices.[16] All three of these areas have

proven to be areas of deep concern and variation among the Old Order. The New Order groups may or may not use meetinghouses. Most New Order groups still meet in members' homes like the Old Order; but, unlike the Old Order, they also have a Sunday School for their children where religious instruction is mixed with the teaching of German. The New Order still uses the written "High" German for religious literature, and the conversational German dialect, but English is used more frequently than in the Old Order.[17] New Order church services still employ German Bibles and songbooks, as in the Old Order, but ministers may, at times, employ English while preaching.

The leading scholar in the field of Amish studies, John A. Hostetler, devotes a chapter of his second edition of Amish Society[18] to comparing the Old Order and the New Order. The following is a condensation of the main points:

Charter:

> The charter involves the Amish position on the following areas: separation, the vow of obedience, the rules for living, the ban, and affinity to nature. The Amish religion in regard to these areas is reflected in their written Dortrecht Confession of Faith,[19] and their "Ordnung," the spoken standards of each church district which are generally (with minor variations) universal among the churches. The goal of the Amish is eternal life by living

simple, Godly ideals as perceived by the community. The Old Order views the doctrine of separation as traditional-physical isolation from outside society and most of its practices. Baptismal vows are viewed as binding for life to the specific Old Order Ordnung for each member who takes them. The shunning of most all worldly conveniences is traditionally oriented. Individual personality is basically tradition-directed. In the New Order the charter is modified to meet practical patterns of change. Separation is primarily directed to spiritual and not necessarily physical isolation. Acceptance of meetinghouses and cars to some New Order groups has added mobility and an independence from the closed community concept. Distinctive dress and hair styles are modified in the New Order, although simplicity and modesty are still maintained. Social patterns also are modified with the more mobile New Order.

Changing Community:

The Old Order highly value their simple agricultural base of life. It is equated with their concept of a traditional, simple community. To them this community is the most promising setting for carrying out their ultimate goals in life. Expanding communities lead to migrations and the formation

of new but similar colonies. The small closed community within their own culture is partially sheltered from the larger outside society. In the New Order farming techniques are expanded by using modernized and efficient equipment. More specialized occupations may be sought out. Other conveniences and the use of them help to bind the community together within more personal-oriented limits.

Concept of the World:

The Old Order sees themselves as a separate entity--in the world but not of it. The will of God for His people is to be peculiar and not unequally yoked with unbelievers. This is extended by the Old Order to spiritual and physical realms. The world is seen as progressing towards fallen worldly wisdom and away from God. Abandoning their way of life is seen as catastrophic. The New Order charter is modified from tradition to renewed Bible study. Tradition without scriptural reason is seen as a block. Capacity for self-evaluation and self-criticism emerges. Concern for lost souls is emerging. Variation from traditions within acceptable spiritual reason can be tolerated with a changing world view.

Patterns of Involvement:

> The Old Order curbs with much success the involvement its members have with outside affairs. This is accomplished by the traditional interpretation of the charter and its theology on separation. The economic goals of outside society are avoided as much as possible. The Old Order has sought to maintain a symbiotic relationship in the face of mass production, mass consumption, and mass leisure. Although they drift from past behavior patterns, the Old Order stays within the rules of the church. The goals of agricultural production among the Old Order have not changed, though some of the methods have. Although they may contribute to worthy endeavors outside of their community, the Old Order gemerally stops short of personal or administrative involvement. In the New Order, farming activity is much closer to that of the typical farmer. Involvement of the New Order with external affairs leads to a sense of concern and responsibility for outside society. Concern for the spiritual needs of others grows. Interest in missions, relief work, and better education (limited) become important.[20]

The New Order Amish take approximately the same stand on education as the Old Order. The New Order build and operate their own eight-grade parochial schools, taught by Amish

teachers. The New Order includes more religious teaching in their school day than some Old Order schools. There is generally Bible reading and discussion, hymn singing in English and German, prayers in English and German, and Bible storytime. Most texts are religiously oriented (often produced by Conservative Mennonite companies.)[21]

It would appear that the New Order Amish form a bridge between the Amish religion and its traditions, and the outside society of contemporary America. The tendancy to adapt their charter and life-styles may make the New Order more stable in our fast-racing contemporary society. With their outgoing missions and activities in communities, it may well be that the New Order may gain significant numbers of converts out of modern society, and may be a vehicle for introducing many more outsiders to the Amish Christian faith.[22]

Notes and References

[1]Denlinger, A. Martha, Real People, p. 75, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1975.

[2]Hostetler, John A., Amish Society, 3rd Ed.-Rev., pp. 97-98, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1980.

[3]Ibid., p. 277.

[4]Ibid., p. 286.

[5]Personal correspondence between the author and Abner F. Beiler at the Pequea Bruderschaft Library, 1983.

[6]Personal correspondence between the author and David Luthy at the Amish Historical Library, 1983.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Personal correspondence between the author, Lloyd Zeagler at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society Library, and David Luthy at the Amish Historical Library, 1983.

[9]Beiler correspondence, op. cit., and Scott, Stephen, Plain Buggies, Amish, Mennonite, and Brethren, pp. 70-71, Good Books, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1981.

[10]Beiler correspondence, op. cit.

[11]Scott, op. cit., pp. 54, 70-71.

[12]Ibid., p. 70.

[13]Beiler correspondence, op. cit.

[14]Hostetler, op. cit., p. 98.

[15]Schotten, Glenn, "The New Amish," Warren Tribune Chronicle, Nov. 9, 1981, pp. C1-C2.

[16]Kauffman, Alma, "Living in the Present," The Plain Dealer Magazine, Feb. 20, 1983.

[17]Interview by telephone between the author and John Mast of Kinsman, Ohio, Aug. 1982.

[18]Hostetler, John A., Amish Society, 2nd Ed.-Rev., John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1968.

[19]Dortrecht Confession of Faith--1632, Rod and Staff Publishers, Crockett, Kentucky.

[20]Hostetler, 2nd Ed., op. cit., pp. 325-343.

[21]Mast interview, op. cit.

[22]Hostetler, 2nd Ed., op. cit., p. 342.

Bibliography and Recommended Reading

Denlinger, A. Martha, Real People, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1975.

Hostetler, John A., Amish Society, 2nd Ed.-Rev., John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1968.

Hostetler, John A., Amish Society, 3rd Ed.-Rev., John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1980.

Kauffman, Alma, "Living in the Present," The Plain Dealer Sunday Magazine, Feb. 20, 1983.

Schotten, Glenn, "The New Amish," Warren Tribune Chronicle, Nov. 8, 1981.

Scott, Stephen, Plain Buggies, Amish, Mennonite, and Brethren, Good Books, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1981.

Shanafelt, Robert, The Amish and Their Germanic Background, M.A. Thesis, Kent State University, 1982.

Part Three: The Amish-Mennonites or "Beachy-Amish" And Education

The Amish-Mennonites, or Beachy Amish, are a branch of the Old Order Amish church that have affiliated with the Conservative Mennonite movement in America. The Amish and Mennonite churches are fundamentalist movements that derived from the Anabaptists in the Reformation. Anabaptists withdrew from the sixteenth century state churches in Europe, principally Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Holland. Similar Anabaptist groups grew to become the German Baptist churches, the Moravians, and the Hutterites of today.

The early Anabaptists were non-conformed to their society, were pacifists (non-resistant,) believed in salvation through Christ and the authority of the Bible, and believed in separation of church and state. Anabaptists devoted themselves to puritanical Christian life-styles. Persecution was very great, and the shedding of Anabaptist blood was frequent. The Anabaptists in the Swiss regions were called "Swiss Brethren" and the Dutch Anabaptists were called "Mennists," after their early leader, Menno Simons. Later the groups were to unite under the same confession of faith, and would eventually be given the name "Mennonites." A conservative wing of Swiss Brethren split from the main group in the period of 1693-1697. This group took a very fundamentalist stand on certain doctrinal points. The group set themselves apart as a separate church and eventually became named "Amish," after a young leader and spokesman, Jacob Ammann.

Migrations to religiously free America started in the early 1700's. The Amish and Mennonites first came to Pennsylvania, and then later to Ohio and other mid-west areas. Today the "Old Order Amish," the conservative wing of the Amish church, has a membership of about 85,000, with the largest numbers in the states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana.[1] The Amish can be found in over 30 states today.

Since coming to America, the Amish and Mennonite churches have grown and divided into many divisions from very conservative to quite contemporary. The term "Old Order Amish," or "Old Order Amish-Mennonite," was established around the year 1860 in America, and was used to label the most conservative Amish, who resisted nearly all innovations and outside trends. Terminology used to label the several Amish groups is often confusing and misapplied. It would be best to clarify the many divisions and branches before we go any further.

John A. Hostetler, the leading authority on Amish studies, made the following distinctions in 1951:[2]

> "Amish" in a historical sense can be properly used to describe all Amish in America before the time of 1860. It is also the generic name used to describe all Amish Groups (without distinction to any group) in contemporary times.

"Amish-Mennonite" refers to groups that organized in a progressive movement in the Amish in the years 1862-1878. These groups favored such innovations as use of English in worship services, Sunday schools, mission work, and meeting houses. This group has more recently been labeled "New Order Amish" or "Church Amish" (due to their use of church houses.) More recent innovations would include use of some electricity and telephones in homes, and the use of tractors and power farm machines. It is estimated that about 50% of this movement eventually reunited with the main Mennonite Church group.

"Conservative Amish-Mennonites" was a second "Church Amish" movement that organized in the year 1910.

"Beachy Amish" is another "Church Amish" group named for a Pennsylvania Bishop who allowed the introduction of some modern trends into his church group. This church was more a mutually agreed division than a major schism. Another early label referred to "Burkholder Amish" from a similar movement in Indiana. Beachy Amish allow limited use of electricity, use of telephones, use of autos, use of church houses, and other innovations in areas such as life-styles and dress codes.

> "Old Order Amish," or "Old Order Amish-Mennonites," represent those who have consistantly maintained the most conservative ways of the Amish, resisting nearly all forms of change. They are characterized by the most conservative dress, no autos, no church houses, no mission work, avoidance of ownership of electrical appliances and telephones in the home. The distinctive Old Order emerged after the Amish-Mennonites separated in 1862 and after.

Since the separation of the Amish in 1862 and those that followed into the early 1900's, three basic groups have more or less prevailed. There is a rather clear classification of various Amish groups according to their "worldliness," or the degree of their conservative nature in relation to other Amish groups and contemporary society ("the world.")[3] These three main groups are the Old Order Amish, the New Order Amish, and the Beachy Amish.[4]

The Old Order Amish are the most conservative of the three groups. They do vary in some minor discipline areas between settlements but generally are an autonomous group, made up of individual church districts in regional areas and nation-wide. The Old Order, with a few minor variations, can be characterized by:

> ...use of horse-drawn vehicles; use of the

> Pennsylvania German dialect; a plain and simple dress; beards, but not mustaches, for married men; longer, simple hairstyles for men; hook-and-eyes on men's dress clothing; long, uncut hair for women; dresses of traditional length and colors for women; wearing of the "prayer cap" on women; pins for women's dresses instead of zippers or ornamental clasps; taboos against electricity, telephones, autos, and in some cases, tractors; simple life-style; no formal education beyond the eighth grade...[5]

The New Order Amish have relaxed some of the Old Order practices, but are still rather conservative. New Order Amish, with a few variations, can be characterized as follows:

> ...use of horse-drawn vehicles; still able to speak the Pennsylvania German language; plain, simple clothing styles, sometimes different in minor ways from the Old Order styles; beards, but no mustaches, on married men; long, uncut hair for women; dresses of conservative design, colors, and length for the women; wearing of the "prayer cap" on women; limited use of electricity; use of the telephone; use of tractors and power farm equipment; in some areas, use of the meeting house; in some areas, use of English in preaching services; generally a simple

> life-style; generally no formal education beyond the eighth grade; in some areas, Sunday schools for the children...[6]

The New Order Amish organized formally in 1966. The Conservative Amish-Mennonites finally evolved into three basic groups. Some stayed with the main body, which has now become the Conservative Mennonite Conference.[7] Others wished to take conservativity to a deeper degree and formed the Unaffiliated Conservative Mennonite churches (some of which have reorganized into small conservative fellowship groups.)[8] Others realigned under the "Beachy" or "Burkholder Amish" group which emerged formally in 1927.

The Beachy Amish were a direct offshoot of the Old Order church. In Pennsylvania in the 1920's, an Amish bishop, Moses M. Beachy, experienced some minor strife with other Old Order leaders over the use of electricity and the automobile, as well as conducting Sunday School for children. Beachy also refused to excommunicate church members who left to join the Conservative Amish-Mennonite church. Eventually, by what appeared to be mutual agreement, Beachy and his group formed their own church, which held Sunday School, and used the tractor, electricity, and the meeting house.[9] Followers and congregations that joined the group eventually became known as "Beachy Amish." Localized groups that had made similar schisms in their areas, such as the John Stoltzfus Church and the Weavertown Church in

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and the Burkholder Amish in Indiana, eventually came into fellowship with the Beachy group and came to use the general name of "Beachy Amish."[10]

There are currently approximately 96 Beachy Amish congregations in the world with an estimated membership of 6,035.[11] The majority of congregations and members exists in the United States. While being more conservative and traditional than most Conservative Mennonite groups, the Beachy Amish are different in many ways from the Old Order. General characteristics of the Beachy group are:[12]

> ...use of modestly arrayed autos; use of English generally and in church services; ability to still use the Pennsylvania German language; plain, simple clothing styles, somewhat different than the Old Order in several ways; beards on adult men; long, uncut hair for women; dresses of conservative length, color, and design for the women; wearing of the "devotional covering," or "prayer cap," on women; restricted use of electricity; use of the telephone; use of meeting houses and Sunday School; use of tractors and power farm machines; some formal education beyond the eighth grade, if in the proper environment; active mission work; evening and prayer meetings...

The Beachy Amish congregations each operate separately with their own standards and discipline. Their affiliation with one another is on the basis of an organized denomination, and not as a formal conference.[13] Some congregations prefer the name "Amish-Mennonite," perhaps referring to their affiliation with the Conservative Amish-Mennonite Church before it reorganized into the Conservative Mennonite Conference. The general name that applies in nearly all cases, however, is "Beachy Amish."

John A. Hostetler identifies several areas of change in the Beachy Amish church. These would include:[14]

> Use of High, or Formal, German for Bible, singing, and preaching services has generally given way to English; singing is without musical instruments, like the Old Order, but unlike the Old Order, four part singing is now used and appreciated; several items in the dress styles have deviated, although staying rather conservative.

Like the New Order Amish, the Beachy Amish speak out with other Conservative Mennonite groups against the use of alcohol and tobacco, and emphasize a more tempered, pure conduct for their membership. Like the Old Order, the New Order, and the Conservative Mennonite groups, the Beachy Amish recognize the 1632 Dortrecht Confession of Faith, drafted as a religious

statement of Christian doctrine and belief by early European Anabaptist-Mennonite leaders. Often, it is each church's interpretation of these doctrines that causes much of the variation between them.

The spirit of the Beachy Amish group is cited by Cornelius Dyck in his revised (1981) edition of An Introduction to Mennonite History: [15]

> ...Doctrinally the church emphasizes repentence, conversion, blood atonement, the new birth, believer's baptism, justification by faith, practical discipleship, and progressive sanctification. Eight Christian ordinances are practiced: baptism, closed communion, foot washing, woman's veiling, the holy kiss, annointing with oil, laying on of hands, and marriage... In spite of the differences, we love the Lord, and we love each other...

Separation, then, is still considered important by the Beachy Amish. They lend faith to the command of Christ:

> "...come out from among them (unbelievers,) and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you..."
> 2 Corinthians 6:17

Examples might include the fact that Beachy members may own

automobiles, but they must be painted black, with extra ornamentation discouraged; and that, although clothing styles are more relaxed than the traditional Old Order, they are still very distinctive for both men and women.

Unlike many Old Order members, the Beachy Amish accept and believe in the "new birth" and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

> "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Romans 10:9

Beachy Amish adhere to the basic scriptural principles and scriptural authority as outlined in the Dortrecht Confession of Faith-1632.[16] As pointed out previously by Hostetler, the Beachy Amish pattern of language has been changing since the split with the Old Order. The predominant language of reading and worship, as well as singing, is English. Many language experts believe that it is undeniable that Beachy Amish and other "Church Amish" are losing their use of High German.[17] While a few older members of the Beachy group may still be able to use High, or formal, German, it is rarely used and is not popular for worship services in most congregations. Pennsylvania German, the mother-tongue of the Anabaptist-Mennonites, especially the Palatinate Swiss Brethren and Jacob Ammann's group,

is still the basic conservational language of the Old Order Amish, most New Order, and some Church Amish groups. Pennsylvania German is a German dialect, very distinct in nature, although some regional differences may exist, especially among the Old Order Amish. The Beachy Amish generally have maintained use and function of Pennsylvania German for conversation, especially in the home or in non-formal settings. English is usually used in public, in formal situations, and church services in nearly all congregations.

Beachy Amish, in most situations, believe in a functional Christian education, often beyond the eighth grade level, if under the influence of the Beachy church. College is rare, but in some cases, permissable. Beachy Amish, like the Old Order and the Conservative Mennonites, build and operate their own Christian schools. Schools are built and operated by congregations. Teachers are from Beachy churches. Printed materials are used for school and home from such suppliers as Pathway Publishers, an Amish company; Rod and Staff Publishers, and Christian Light Publications, both Mennonite companies. It is believed that, like other Church Amish and Conservative Mennonite groups, the Beachy Amish schools enjoy freedom to operate outside of state sanctions because of the 1972 Supreme Court case concerning Old Order Amish parochial schools.[18] The decision generally permits the Old Order to operate their schools as they wish and to permit children to leave formal day-school instruction after eight grades for religious principles. The similarities between

the House Amish, the Conservative Mennonites, and the Old Order Amish may be the reason for the freedoms most states give to schools operated by all three groups.

While basically a farming people, the Beachy Amish can be found in other lines of work, including carpentry, truck driving, factory work, blacksmithing, and mechanical work. For scriptural reasons, union membership is not permitted. Because they are a non-resistant people, like the Old Order and the Mennonites, Beachy members will not submit to military duty, are non-violent, and will not sue at law.

"...Love your enemies..." Matthew 5:44

Because of the New Testament principle of separation of church and state, Beachy Amish will not vote or hold public office, just as many other "House" and "Church" groups will not.

Beachy Amish hold church service every Sunday, as opposed to the Old Order practice of holding services every other Sunday. Beachy groups also hold fellowship meetings, revivals, weekly prayer meetings, and Sunday School classes, while the Old Order holds to none of these. Beachy ministers are ordained by lot, according to scripture, out of the congregation with no formal training provided.

The Beachy Amish are actively involved in mission work in

the United States and outside of the country. Congregations all contribute funds to this effort. The church also has organized relief and aid programs that render help to Beachy congregations, individuals, and even outsiders in times of great need or disaster.

Young people start joining church around the ages of 14-16, when the church feels that they are accountable for their actions and can look at the spiritual side of life seriously.[19] Old Order youth usually join their church later, around the ages of 18-21. Young people have social gatherings each month. Marriage is permitted only in like faith. Although, in some ways, social behavior is given more room for variance than in the Old Order, rowdy and unbecoming behavior is less common among Beachy young people than most Old Order groups.

Strictness and conservatism has some variance between congregations, and even more so between settlements. Most differences are in the individual church standards of discipline and the degree of application of the Ordinances of the church as outlined in the Dortrecht Confession.

Sociologists believe that the Beachy Amish may continue to grow more and more different from the Old Order. It is possible that the Beachy group is making many more changes than the Old Order, including modern decor and furnishings in homes, more variance in the dress of men and women, and the growing variance

of interaction with outside society.[20] Some experts believe that, eventually, a merger with the Conservative Mennonites may take place, forming a Beachy Mennonite church.[21] This opinion is not held by experts and writers from within the Beachy Amish church. These Beachy writers and ministers feel it is essential for the Beachy church to find a middle ground between practical change and variation, and the traditional Bible-based heritage that has influenced and molded the Beachy Amish since their formation.[22] If current statistics are any indication of their past growth, it would not appear unsafe to predict that the Beachy Amish will continue to increase in numbers. Taking older Conservative groups as an example, one cannot say with any certainty if the Beachy church will remain relatively the same or become a bit more contemporary. The coming generations will decide.

Notes and References

[1]Hostetler, John A., Amish Life, p. 10, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1981.

[2]Hostetler, John A., Annotated Bibliography on the Amish, pp. vii-viii, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1951.

[3]Hostetler, John A., Amish Society, 3rd Ed.-Rev., p. 97, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1980.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Benjamin, Steven M., "The Old Order Amish: Their History, Culture, and Languages," Occasional Papers of the Society for German-American Studies, No. 8, p. 146, ed. by Steven M. Benjamin, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, 1980.

[6]Hostetler, Amish Society, op. cit., pp. 97 and 277.

[7]Ibid., pp. 276-277.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Schwieder, Elmer and Dorothy, A Peculiar People: Iowa's Old

Order Amish, pp. 129-130, University of Iowa Press, Ames, Iowa. 1975.

[10]Hostetler, Amish Society, op. cit., pp. 276-277.

[11]Mennonite Yearbook and Directory--1982, p. 98, ed. by James E. Horsch, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1982.

[12]see these two volumes: Hostetler, Amish Society, op. cit. pp. 276-277; and Schwieder, op. cit., pp. 136 and 138.

[13]Gingerich, Orland, The Amish of Canada, p. 175, Herald Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. 1972.

[14]Hostetler, Amish Society, op. cit., p. 277.

[15]Dyck, Cornelius, An Introduction to Mennonite History, Rev. Ed., p. 236, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania. 1981.

[16]Dortrecht Confession of Faith--1632, Rod and Staff Publishers, Crockett, Kentucky.

[17]Benjamin, op. cit., p. 146.

[18]Keim, Albert, Compulsory Education and the Amish, Beacon Press, New York, New York, 1975.

[19]Schwieder, op. cit., pp. 135-136.

[20]Gingerich, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

[21]Schwieder, op. cit., p. 139.

[22]McGrath, William R., Appreciating 15 Values of Our Amish-Mennonite Heritage, A-M Publications, Minerva, Ohio, 1981.

Bibliography and Recommended Reading

Benjamin, Steven M., "The Old Order Amish: Their History, Culture, and Languages," Occasional Papers of the Society for German-American Studies, No. 8, ed. by Steven M. Benjamin, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, 1980.

Dyck, Cornelius, An Introduction to Mennonite History, Rev. Ed., Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1981.

Gingerich, Orland, The Amish of Canada, Herald Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, 1972.

Hostetler, John A., Amish Life, Rev. Ed., Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1981.

Hostetler, John A., Amish Society, 3rd Ed.-Rev., John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1980.

Hostetler, John A., Annotated Bibliography on the Amish, pp. vii-viii, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1951.

Kauffman, Daniel, Doctrines of the Bible, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1928.

The Letters of the Amish Division, translated and edited by

John B. Mast, Christian J. Schlaback and Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1950.

Mennonite Confession of Faith, Rod and Staff Publishers, Crockett, Kentucky.

Mennonite Yearbook and Directory--1982, ed. by James E. Horsch, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1982.

McGrath, William R., Appreciating 15 Values of Our Amish-Mennonite Heritage, A-M Publications, Minerva, Ohio, 1981.

Schwieder, Elmer and Dorothy, A Peculiar People: Iowa's Old Order Amish, pp. 128-139, Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 1975.

Smith, Elmer J., Meet the Mennonites, Applied Arts Publishers, Lebanon, Pennsylvania, 1961.